

Financial Express

SUMMER 2010

The iCAB – Get One Today!

A Perspective by Randy Christopherson

... Now coming soon to every Federal agency near you, the "iCAB," the latest life-changing thingamajig that you cannot live without. It's sleek and seamless, it's integrated, it's powerful and zazzy, it's a marvelous blend of advanced engineering and utility and yet fully compliant with laws and regulations. Take one home today. You will not know how you ever lived without it.

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute to this issue of the SFC Financial Express. As you can see, the picture here makes me look at bit like Steve Jobs (CEO of Apple Corporation) hawking the latest technological innovation – albeit a very goofy looking Steve Jobs. So, let me take that theme and run with it.

practitioners of Federal financial management – those hearty souls whose jobs it is to take lofty ideals and actually make it work. Place this group of brilliant and practical minds into a fairly intimate setting, add in the guiding hand of the incredibly competent SF Finance Center staff, and you create an unparalleled opportunity for inquiry, sharing and learning.

Where else can you find help navigating the spaghetti of Government financial systems? Where else can you volunteer your efforts on a focus group to create practical products such as a Disaster Recovery Directory with real-life application

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But all seriousness aside, the Customer Advisory Board (CAB) is indeed an extremely powerful instrument in the right hands. It is a confab of actual, hands-on, day-to-day



The San Francisco RFC Perspective by SFC's Deputy Director

Welcome to the Summer 2010 issue of the San Francisco Financial Center (SFC) "Financial Express" newsletter. I hope you are as excited as I am about the upcoming Payment Management Customer Conference (PMCC) on August 23-25, 2010 in Broomfield, Colorado. The centers have been working diligently to provide you with an array of topics covering important Financial Management Service (FMS) programs and initiatives, including interactive sessions between the speakers and the audience.

This edition of the "Financial Express" includes:

- A Customer Advisory Board (CAB) member perspective by Randy Christopherson, Director of the Small Business Administration, Denver Finance Office.
- Some important changes to the payment processing affecting federal agency Certifying Officers.
- An overview of the progress made by the "FMS Programs Access Workgroup" established by the SFC CAB.
- An article on the recent visit by the Social Security Administration, Western Program Service Center to SFC.
- Reasons why you should consider using the Internet Payment Platform to reduce costs and improve financial processing at your agency.

We invite you to explore the SFC Web site at www.fms.treas.gov/sfc. and to check out each section to learn what the site has to offer.

I hope you find the new look of the "Financial Express" easier to read and urge you to send your comments on these changes to financialexpress@fms.treas.gov.

Have a safe trip to Colorado! See you there!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Abbie Loftus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*("The iCAB, Get One Today!"
– continued from page 1.)*

under the worst case scenarios? Where else can you hear leadership and vision from the very pinnacle of management and policy makers at Treasury's Financial Management Service? Where else can you hear best practices from your peers at other agencies? And where else can you make your voice heard loud and clear to this top management of Treasury? Where else can you ask any obtuse question without fear of being mortified (I've personally tested this)? *Only at the Customer Advisory Board.*



*Attendees of the 2010 San Francisco
CAB Conference.*

Yes, our time may be precious and our budgets tight. We may be involved with many professional and personal development groups, often sitting in large conferences only a face among the crowd of hundreds or even thousands. But the small investment of time and travel to the CAB results in the same or better information, results in relationships that allow us to "phone-a-friend" to bounce or steal ideas, and results in the rare opportunity to corner the big shots of financial management up close and personal to make sure they know what they are doing.

I have been involved in the SF CAB since its inception and have treasured every event. I highly recommend that you get involved and join in on the learning.

Payment Automation Manager Release 3.0



As reported in a previous release of the San Francisco Financial Center (SFC) newsletter, The Financial Management Service (FMS) is working on Release 3.0 of the Payment Automation Manager (PAM). This release will affect most payment agencies as all Vendor/Miscellaneous payment types will be processed through PAM. The work on this release is in its latter stage of development and it is slated for a November 2010 implementation.

PAM 3.0 is an important release for FMS as it will be the first time a payment file from PAM will be processed through the Treasury Offset Program. In its first two releases, the payment types implemented were not eligible for offsetting. **Another important function in this release is that the payments will be streaming through the system, allowing the automatic matching of the payment files to their corresponding certified schedules.** With this feature, very little manual intervention will be possible. Thus, once payments are certified, there is no turning back – the payments will be made and cannot be reversed in PAM. So, a caution for the payment agencies: Please be careful when certifying your payments.

The implementation will be gradual. As November nears, the SFC will contact its customer payment agencies to plan for the inclusion of their payment files into PAM processing. SFC will work with its agencies from November 2010 through February 2011 to complete the implementation.

If you would like to learn more about SFC's implementation plan, please contact Joe Paule at 510-594-7130.

For more information about PAM, please visit <http://fms.treas.gov/pam>.



FMS Sets Sail On Improving Agency Programs Access

by Rick Corrigan

At the San Francisco Financial Center (SFC) Customer Advisory Board (CAB) Conference in Portland, Oregon, CAB members, led by Pilar Rowe of the Bonneville Power Administration, established a new workgroup project to improve the overall enrollment and security procedures for accessing Financial Management Service (FMS) systems. Over 30 people, representing CAB members, FMS staff, and the other Regional Financial Centers have formed a team to create the FMS Programs Access Workgroup.

The goal of the FMS Programs Access Workgroup is to standardize the security enrollment process and establish new procedures for a self-registration process to be conducted via the Internet for FMS applications. Bill Radford, Director of the Enterprise Business Solutions Integrator Staff, has identified the 20 most requested FMS programs. In the months to

come, his staff will be working on streamlining the security enrollment process by creating one standardized form with the option to request access to multiple FMS applications. In the future, they hope to provide agencies with the ability to complete and submit enrollment forms electronically through an FMS supported platform.

The workgroup is an example of teamwork and FMS federal agency partnership in action. Mike Moran, Brenda

Alexander, and Tony Morris of FMS are providing information technology support to the team. This project is the first step in finding solutions to simplify security access to FMS programs. The CAB Corner will keep you updated on the developments of this important mission. If you would like more information about the FMS Programs Access Workgroup, please call (510) 594-7300 or email to: San.Francisco.Financial.Center@fms.treas.gov.

In the future, they hope to provide agencies with the ability to complete and submit enrollment forms electronically through an FMS supported platform.

SFC Welcomes SSA Visitors



A group photo of the staff of SFC hosting visitors from the Social Security Administration after touring the center.

On Wednesday, June 9, 2010, representatives from the Social Security Administration (SSA) came to Emeryville to tour the San Francisco Financial Center (SFC). The eight visitors led by Leslie S. Walker, Regional Communications Director, SSA Western Region Office, had the opportunity to meet and talk with Phil Belisle, SFC Regional Director, and Abbie Loftus, SFC Deputy Regional Director, as well as some of the branch managers.

SFC looks forward to working with SSA on education and outreach to encourage the unbanked Federal benefit payment recipients to sign up for the Direct Express debit card.

The SFC Customers 1st employee team led a tour through the center which included an up close and personal look at the processing of check payments in the Payment Facilities Branch. The visitors were among the first to observe the check processing after the 40 year old check wrapping systems were replaced with intelligent inserting systems.



Visitors from the Social Security Administration observing the processing of check payments during their tour of the SFC.

Over the years, SFC has enjoyed a long and supportive partnership with the SSA's Western Region, promoting GO Direct at SSA offices, at national conventions, and in joint appearances on Comcast television in the San Francisco Bay Area. SFC looks forward to working with SSA on education and outreach to encourage the unbanked Federal benefit payment recipients to sign up for the Direct Express debit card. Plans are also in the works to jointly promote the GO Direct initiative.

Internet Payment Platform Update

By the Internet Payment Platform team, Agency Enterprise Solutions Division



*Above: Paul Lionikis, Strategic Agency Relations Director,
Internet Payment Platform, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston*

The Internet Payment Platform (IPP) is a centralized electronic invoicing and payment information service offered by the Financial Management Service (FMS) at no cost to federal agencies and their commercial vendors. IPP is a managed service provided by FMS as a means of reducing costs and improving financial processing across the federal government. IPP compliments existing agency and vendor financial systems. Agencies do not deploy the IPP application within their own system environment; rather, agency systems and users electronically exchange files with a single centralized instance of the IPP hosted within a secure Treasury infrastructure.

The IPP provides agencies with cost saving opportunities through reduced reliance on paper-based invoice processes and expedited payment approval cycles. By providing a single centralized portal for agency and supplier users, the IPP:

- *Decreases the effort required to ensure that invoices are correct and match their purchase orders (PO), reducing invoice exceptions and manual intervention.*

- *Improves access to payment information for all users by interfacing with existing FMS disbursement and accounting systems as well as the agency's procurement, accounts payable (A/P), and accounts receivable (A/R) systems.*
- *Provides on-line self-service functionality for supplier users, reducing burdens on agency staff related to answering inquiries on invoice and payment status.*
- *Facilitates shorter payment approval cycles by providing Web-based workflow for expedited approvals of invoices, saving on handling costs per payment transaction and potentially decreasing interest penalties.*
- *Enables agencies to send electronic POs and receive electronic invoices, reducing the cost of paper-based orders, supplier correspondence, associated postage, and the cost of manually processing incoming invoices.*

One agency using IPP reported savings of 24% over manual invoice processing.

The IPP utilizes a modular design to allow agencies to select and implement the specific

services most appropriate to their business needs. At present there are four modules offered in IPP:

- *Purchase Orders: Allows agencies to upload POs from their procurement system, notifies suppliers that they have received a PO, and allows them to access it.*
- *Invoices: Gives suppliers the ability to create and submit invoices, notifies agencies when an invoice has been received, and exports the invoices back to the core financial system.*
- *Workflow: Supports a sophisticated invoice approval process. Offers multiple approval steps, escalation if the invoice is not processed promptly, delegation, and reassignment.*
- *Payment Notifications: Provides suppliers with remittance data on their payments made by Treasury, including Treasury Offset information.*

An agency does not have to use all four IPP modules, and may roll them out in phases. For instance, an agency may opt to use their core financial system's workflow instead of IPP's Workflow module. In addition, each agency can configure the IPP to support their specific business processes. This includes setting up the agency's business rules for screening invoices, various email notifications, workflow routing, and parameters, etc.

Agencies using IPP today for purchase order and invoice processing are the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP), the Bureau of Public Debt's Administrative Resource Center (BPD/ARC), and the Department of Interior (DOI). BPD/ARC is rolling out IPP for all of their customers, several of whom are already in production. DOI is implementing IPP at each of their internal bureaus as part of the conversion to their new core financial system, Federal and Business Management System (FBMS). In addition, IPP provides Payment Notifications to suppliers on behalf of over 168 different federal entities.

IPP is currently in implementation for the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service,

and it is under evaluation by many other departments and agencies.

Another exciting IPP initiative is a pilot program for Intra-governmental buy/sell transaction processing between BEP and BPD. Under this pilot, BEP uses IPP to post purchase orders for goods or services that BPD will provide, and BPD submits invoices against those purchase orders. IPP allows the two agencies to better track and reconcile their transactions. Future releases will include support for additional data from the

standard Inter-agency Agreement, workflow processes to facilitate submission and acceptance of

buy/sell transactions and an automated interface to IPAC for settlement.

Look for our IPP presentation at the 2010 FMS Payment Management Customer Conference in Broomfield, Colorado.

For more information on IPP, please contact Paul Lionikis (FRB Boston) at (617) 973-3637 – Paul.Lionikis@bos.frb.org, or Pavita Murthi at (202) 874-3685 – pavita.murthi@fms.treas.gov, or visit the IPP web site at www.ipp.gov.

One agency using IPP has reported savings of 24% to 46% per commercial vendor payment.





Calendar of Events

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Financial Management Service
Products & Initiatives Branch
510-594-7300

Questions / Comments

Email:

FinancialExpress@fms.treas.gov

August 24 - 25, 2010

Payment Management Customer Conference
Broomfield, Colorado

September 20 - 21, 2010

Payment Symposium
Long Beach, California

Visit the SFC Website at: www.fms.treas.gov/sfc

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